

Overview

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that employment rose by 266,000 in April, and the unemployment rate was little changed at 6.1 percent. Notable job gains in leisure and hospitality, other services, and local government education were partially offset by employment declines in temporary help services and in couriers and messengers.¹ For veterans, unemployment increased to 5.2 percent in April. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 6.1 percent to 5.1 percent in April. Of the total 480,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 and over, 19 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 81 percent have been unemployed for more than five weeks. The average length of unemployment is 32.8 weeks (the median is 21.0 weeks). The overall unemployment trend varies by different veteran demographic factors, however, some more than others.

With respect to age, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans ages 18-24 decreased from 15.1 percent to 12.7 percent in April. The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans ages 45 and older increased from 3.9 percent to 4.8 percent in April. During this period, post 9/11 veterans (ages 18-24 and 45 and older) were unemployed at a higher rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group (10.0 percent for nonveterans ages 18-24 and 4.7 percent for nonveterans ages 45 and older).

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced an increase in unemployment, from 3.8 percent to 5.7 percent in April. Similarly, the overall unemployment rate for female veterans (all cohorts) increased to 4.4 percent. By comparison, female nonveterans have an unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. Total male veteran unemployment saw a monthly increase in unemployment from 5.3 percent to 5.4 percent. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment decreased from 6.5 percent to 5.0 percent in April.

Black or African American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 4.1 percent. This rate is lower than the 9.6 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment to 3.9 percent. This rate is lower than the 7.4 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Asian or Asian American post-9/11 veterans had an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent in April. This rate is lower than the 5.5 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Readers should be cautioned, however, that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.nr0.htm>

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on May 7, 2021. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending April 2021.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	March 2021	April 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
All Americans (18 and over)	6.1	5.7	-0.4	7.9
All Veterans	5.0	5.2	+0.2	6.5
Post-9/11 Veterans	6.1	5.1	-1.0	7.3
Gulf-War I Era Veterans	4.5	5.2	+0.7	4.8
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era	4.4	4.1	-0.3	6.7
All Nonveterans	6.2	5.7	-0.5	8.0

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS

Demographic Category	March 2021	April 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	15.1	12.7	-2.4	14.6
25-34	8.0	7.0	-1.0	8.8
35-44	4.4	2.2	-2.2	5.8
45-54	3.6	5.5	+1.9	5.0
55-64	4.9	6.5	+1.6	6.5
65 and older	3.7	3.6	-0.1	6.4
Male	5.3	5.4	+0.1	6.5
Female	2.9	4.4	+1.5	6.7
White, Anglo, Caucasian	5.0	4.9	-0.1	6.1
Black or African American	5.4	4.5	-0.9	7.5
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	5.8	6.0	+0.2	7.4
Asian or Asian American	—	10.7	—	5.1

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

Demographic Category	March 2021	April 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	15.1	12.7	-2.4	14.6
25-34	8.0	7.0	-1.0	8.8
35-44	4.1	2.0	-2.1	5.9
45-54	3.0	3.2	+0.2	5.4
55-64	5.9	7.7	+1.8	5.2
65 and older	—	4.4	—	12.5
Male	6.5	5.0	-1.5	7.4
Female	3.8	5.7	+1.9	7.2
White, Anglo, Caucasian	6.3	4.9	-1.4	7.0
Black or African American	5.0	4.1	-0.9	6.8
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	6.2	3.9	-2.3	8.7
Asian or Asian American	—	5.2	—	6.7

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS

Demographic Category	March 2021	April 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	10.8	10.0	-0.8	14.6
25-34	6.9	6.2	-0.7	8.4
35-44	5.4	4.8	-0.6	6.4
45-54	4.8	4.6	-0.2	6.4
55-64	4.7	4.7	0.0	6.8
65 and older	5.2	4.8	-0.4	7.6
Male	6.6	6.1	-0.5	7.8
Female	5.7	5.3	-0.4	8.2
White, Anglo, Caucasian	5.4	4.9	-0.5	7.2
Black or African American	10.0	9.6	-0.4	11.5
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	8.1	7.4	-0.7	10.4
Asian or Asian American	6.0	5.5	-0.5	8.7

NOTE: Although the BLS reports the national average for those 16 and over, the tables above include only those that are 18 and over to make a more accurate comparison to the veteran population. Post-9/11 are of the Gulf War Era II (September 2001-present). Other periods of service include Gulf War Era I (August 1990-August 2001), Vietnam Era (August 1964-April 1975), Korean War (July 1950-January 1955), World War II (December 1941-December 1946). Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified only in the most recent one. Veterans who served during one of the selected wartime periods and another peacetime period are classified only in the wartime period. The minority-by-gender unemployment rates are not displayed due to small sample size and are more appropriately displayed as annual averages.